

STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION GUIDELINES: Swimming Pools



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DO NOT DRAIN UNTREATED POOL WATER ONTO STREETS OR INTO STORM DRAINS

Chapter 8.50 of the Covina Municipal Code prohibits the discharge of untreated pool, spa or fountain water into the storm drain system. All discharge water is to be kept on your property and used for landscape irrigation unless a Swimming Pool Drainage Permit has been obtained from the City of Covina. This may require discharging intermittently for several days if you have limited landscape area to prevent runoff onto the right-of-way or onto a neighbor's property.

Anything going into storm drains that isn't rainwater contributes to stormwater pollution, which contaminates waterways and the ocean, kills marine life, and causes beach closures.

Storm drains take runoff directly to rivers and the ocean without treatment. Chemicals in pool water are toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Pool filter sand, fine particles and fibers can deposit on the gravel in streams, preventing oxygen from reaching fish eggs and young fish and could clog fish gills.

Follow the simple steps outlined below to obtain a required Swimming Pool Drainage Permit and prevent stormwater pollution when maintaining or draining your pool, spa, or fountain.

MAINTAIN AND CLEAN YOUR POOL PROPERLY

(1) Prevent algae problems with regular cleaning, consistent adequate chlorine levels, and well-maintained water filtration and circulation systems; (2) Do not use copper-based algacides. Control algae with chlorine or other alternatives, such as sodium bromide; (3) Manage pH and water hardness to minimize corrosion of copper pipes; (4) Discharge of acid cleaning waste or filter medium into the storm drain system is PROHIBITED; (5) Per CMC 8.50.061 K., "The discharge of chlorinated/brominated swimming pool water and filter backwash into the municipal storm water system is prohibited."

PROPERLY CLEAN AND/OR DISPOSE OF FILTERS AND FILTER MEDIUM

NEVER clean a filter in the street or near a storm drain. Rinse cartridge filters onto a dirt area, and work filter residue into soil. Backwash diatomaceous earth (DE) filters onto dirt or planters on your property. Dispose of spent DE in the garbage. DE cannot be discharged to surface waters, storm drainage systems, septic systems, or on the ground.

PROPERLY CLEAN UP POOL CHEMICAL SPILLS AND DISPOSE OF POOL CHEMICALS

Sweep up or use an absorbent (such as kitty litter) to clean up pool chemical spills. Never wash spilled chemicals into the storm drain.

Dispose of leftover pool chemicals and paints by taking these and other hazardous materials to a Los Angeles County Household Hazardous Waste Round-Up. See upcoming events at www.888CleanLA.com or call 1-888-CLEANLA.

PROPERLY DISCHARGE POOL, SPA, AND FOUNTAIN WATER

When draining pools, spas, or fountains, take the following steps:

1. Fill out the FREE Swimming Pool Drainage Permit Application and fax or deliver to the Environmental Services (ES) Section. *If ES has not issued a permit and water is discharging off your property, you will be issued a notice of violation and **FINED** for violating Covina Municipal Code Section 8.50.030A.*
2. Once the permit has been issued, gradually drain pool, spa, or fountain water into a vegetated area on your property, thus recycling/reusing the water. When draining or backwashing into a vegetated or unpaved area, the water must NOT leave your property. OR
3. Discharge to the sanitary sewer via cleanout. Many pools are plumbed to allow the pool to drain directly to the sanitary sewer. If draining a pool into the sanitary sewer, prevent backflow by maintaining an “air gap” between the discharge line and the sewer line (do not seal the connection between the hose and sewer line). Keep discharge flow levels low to prevent overflows and flooding. OR
4. You may discharge the water into the gutter and storm drain ONLY IF the water has been tested by ES staff and is verified to be dechlorinated /debrominated and free of algae or other chemicals, wastes, and materials. “Green pools” or pools with algae are NOT to be drained until the water has been properly treated and you wait seven (7) days.

Dechlorinated/debrominated swimming pool discharge means swimming pool or spa water that has no measurable chlorine or bromine and does not contain any detergents, dirt, or additional chemicals not typically found in swimming pool water. Residential chlorine is not to exceed 0.1 mg/l (parts per million). Only clear water with a pH factor lower than 8.5 or higher than 6.5 may be discharged.

Before you drain your pool, purchase a test kit at a pool or home supply store to ensure that your discharge complies with these requirements. *If City Staff determines that your pool discharge contains these substances, you will be asked to treat the pool to bring the water to acceptable levels before draining or you may be issued a notice of violation and may be fined.*

Please call the Environmental Services Section for drainage instructions if you have a salt-water pool.

Contact Environmental Services at 626-384-5480 if you have questions about proper pool maintenance and drainage procedures.